

Thursday, June 26, 2008

House Meets At...	Votes Predicted At...
10:00 a.m. For Legislative Business	Last Vote: 5:00-6:00 p.m.
Ten "One-minutes" Per Side	

Any anticipated Member absences for votes this week should be reported to the Office of the Majority Whip at 226-3210.

Floor Schedule and Procedure

- **H. Res. 1304—Rule providing for consideration of H.R. 6052 – Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008 Motions to Suspend the Rules (Rep. Castor-Rules):** The rule provides for consideration of H.R. 6052 under a structured rule. The rule provides one hour of general debate equally divided and controlled by the chairman and ranking minority member of the Committee on Transportation and Infrastructure. The rule provides one motion to recommit with or without instructions. The rule also allows the Speaker to entertain motions to suspend the rules on the legislative day of Thursday, June 26, 2008, relating to (1) a measure concerning the Commodity Exchange Act and energy markets; (2) a measure concerning the issuance of oil and gas leases on Federal lands or waters. Debate on the rule will be managed by Rep. Castor, and consideration will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the rule.
 - Possible vote on a Democratic Motion ordering the previous question. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
 - Vote on adoption of the rule. **Democrats are urged to vote yes.**
- **H.R. 6052 – Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008 (Rep. Oberstar-Transportation and Infrastructure):** Pursuant to the rule debate on the bill will be managed by Transportation and Infrastructure Committee Chair Rep. James Oberstar, or his designee, and will proceed as follows:
 - One hour of debate on the bill.
 - Debate and votes on amendments to the bill.
 - Possible debate and vote on a Republican motion to recommit the bill.
 - Vote on final passage of the bill. **Democrats are urged to vote yes on passage of the bill.**

- **Suspension Bills:** Today, the House will consider several bills on the Suspension calendar. Bills considered on the Suspension calendar are debatable for 40 minutes; may not be amended; and require a two-thirds vote for passage. If a recorded vote is requested, it will be postponed.
 - 1) **H.R. ____** - The Energy Markets Emergency Act (Rep. Peterson/Rep. Van Hollen – Agriculture)
 - 2) **H.R. 6251** - Responsible Federal Oil and Gas Lease Act (Rep. Rahall – Natural Resources)
- **Postponed Suspension Votes:**
 - 1) **H.Res. 1294** - National Save For Retirement Week (Rep. Schwartz – Ways and Means)
 - 2) **H.Con.Res. 163** - Expressing the sense of Congress in support of further research and activities to increase public awareness, professional education, diagnosis, and treatment of Dandy-Walker syndrome and hydrocephalus (Rep. Wilson (NM) – Energy and Commerce)
 - 3) **H.Res. 353** - Expressing the sense of the House of Representatives that there should be an increased Federal commitment supporting the development of innovative advanced imaging technologies for prostate cancer detection and treatment (Rep. Cummings – Energy and Commerce)
 - 4) **H.Res. 1231** - Supporting the goals and ideals of Vietnam Veterans Day and calling on the American people to recognize such a day (Rep. Shuler – Veterans' Affairs)
 - 5) **H.R. 2245** - To designate the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Wenatchee, Washington, as the Elwood "Bud" Link Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic (Rep. Hastings (WA) – Veterans' Affairs)
 - 6) **H.R. 4264** - To name the Department of Veterans Affairs spinal cord injury center in Tampa, Florida, as the "Michael Bilirakis Department of Veterans Affairs Spinal Cord Injury Center" (Rep. Miller (FL) – Veterans' Affairs)
 - 7) **H.R. 4289** - To name the Department of Veterans Affairs outpatient clinic in Ponce, Puerto Rico, as the "Euripides Rubio Department of Veterans Affairs Outpatient Clinic" (Rep. Fortuno – Veterans' Affairs)
 - 8) **H.R. 4918** - To name the Department of Veterans Affairs medical center in Miami, Florida, as the "Bruce W. Carter Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center" (Rep. Ros-Lehtinen – Veterans' Affairs)
 - 9) **H.Res. 1291** - Expressing gratitude for the contributions of the American GI Forum on its 60th anniversary (Rep. Rodriguez – Veterans' Affairs)
 - 10) **H.Res. 1271** - Recognizing National Homeownership Month and the importance of homeownership in the United States (Rep. Gary Miller (CA) – Financial Services)
 - 11) **H.Con.Res. 370** - Expressing support for designation of September 2008 as "Gospel Music Heritage Month" and honoring gospel music for its valuable and longstanding contributions to the culture of the United States (Rep. Sheila Jackson-Lee – Oversight and Government Reform)
 - 12) **H.Con.Res. 195** - Expressing the sense of the Congress that a National Dysphagia Awareness Month should be established (Rep. Wamp – Oversight and Government Reform)

Bill Summary and Key Issues

H.R.6052 – The Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008

(Rep. Oberstar – Transportation and Infrastructure)

To increase public transportation use across the United States, H.R. 6052, the “Saving Energy Through Public Transportation Act of 2008”:

- **Authorizes \$1.7 Billion of Capital and Operating Funds for Transit Agencies to Reduce Fares and Expand Transit Services.** This section authorizes \$850 million (General Fund) for each of fiscal years 2008 and 2009 to allow public transit agencies to reduce transit fares and expand transit services. These funds will allow transit agencies to provide incentives for commuters to choose transit options, thereby reducing our nation’s transportation-related energy consumption and reliance on foreign oil, as well as decreasing its greenhouse gas emissions. These funds will be distributed under current law urban and rural transit formulas (49 U.S.C. 5307 and 49 U.S.C. 5311, respectively). The Federal share for these grants is 100 percent and funds will only be available for a two-year period.
- **Increases the Federal Share for Clean Fuel and Alternative Fuel Transit Bus, Ferry, or Locomotive-related Equipment and Facilities from 90 percent to 100 percent.** Under current law, the Federal share of the portion of transit buses, ferries, or locomotives that is for clean fuel or alternative fuel-related equipment or facilities for compliance with the Clean Air Act is 90 percent. Under the Federal Transit Administration’s interpretation of current law, the total Federal share for alternative fuel buses only increases from 80 percent to 83 percent. The bill increases the Federal share for the alternative fuel vehicle-related equipment from 90 percent to 100 percent of the net project cost for fiscal years 2008 and 2009. As a result, the total Federal share for such buses will be more than 90 percent.
- **Extends Transit Benefits to All Federal Employees.** Under current law, all Federal agencies within the National Capital Region are required to establish a transit pass benefits program and offer transit passes to Federal employees. The bill establishes a nationwide Federal transit pass benefits program and requires all Federal agencies in the United States to offer transit passes to Federal employees. The bill also requires that the Department of Transportation (“DOT”) to establish specific guidance for implementing the nationwide transit pass benefits program. The guidance will ensure that Federal agencies have the necessary administrative procedures to ensure that Federal employees properly use the program.
 - The current law requirement originated with Executive Order 13150, signed by President Clinton on April 21, 2000. The Executive Order required that all Federal agencies within the National Capital Region offer transit passes to Federal employees. It also required the Department of Transportation (“DOT”), the Environmental Protection Agency, and the Department of Energy to implement a

nationwide three-year pilot transit pass benefit program for all qualified Federal employees of those agencies.

- The Department of Transportation has determined that both the National Capital Region program and the nationwide pilot program are a success, and recommends that the transit pass benefits program be extended to all Federal employees nationwide.
- **Establishes a Vanpool Pilot Program.** The bill establishes a two-year pilot program to allow the amount expended by private providers of public transportation by vanpool for the acquisition of vans to be used as the non-Federal share for matching Federal transit funds in five communities. Under current law, only local public funds may be used as local match, and this pilot program allows private funds to be used in limited circumstances. The provision requires the private providers of vanpool services to use revenues they receive in providing public transportation, in excess of its operating costs, for the purpose of acquiring vans, excluding any amounts the providers may have received in Federal, State, or local government assistance for such acquisition. The Department of Transportation will implement and oversee the vanpool pilot projects, and will report back to Congress on the costs, benefits, and efficiencies of the vanpool demonstration projects.
- **Increases the Federal Share for Additional Parking Facilities at End-Of-Line Fixed Guideway Stations.** The bill increases the Federal share for additional parking facilities at end-of-line fixed guideway stations to increase the total number of transit commuters who have access to those stations. The bill increases the Federal share from 80 percent to 100 percent for fiscal years

Anticipated Amendments to H.R. 6052

1. Oberstar (MN): Would add a finding that public transportation stakeholders should engage local communities in promoting the importance of using public transportation. It would amend section 3 (grants to improve public transportation services) to clarify that transit agencies may use these new grants to offset the increased cost of fuel to transit agencies. It also clarifies that intercity bus service and acquiring facilities or equipment to improve fuel efficiency are eligible activities under the bill. It would require the Transportation Secretary to carry out consumer awareness programs on the benefits of alternative transportation. (10 minutes)

2. Davis, Tom (VA)/McGovern (MA): Would amend section 5 (transportation fringe benefits) to authorize increasing the transit portion of the transportation fringe benefit so it is equal to the maximum limit of the parking portion of the transportation fringe benefit. (10 minutes)

3. Mahoney (FL): Would provide an exception to section 526 of the Energy Independence and Security Act (regarding procurement and acquisition of alternative fuels) by exempting contracts for generally available fuels that are not

predominantly produced from noncontroversial petroleum sources if (1) the contract does not require the contractor to provide alternative fuels, (2) the purpose of the contract is not to obtain an alternative fuel, and (3) the contract does not provide incentives for a refinery upgrade or expansion to allow a refinery to use or increase its use of fuel from a nonconventional petroleum source. (10 minutes)

4. Reichert (WA): Would amend section 7 (federal share for fixed guideway stations) to create a 100% Federal share for park-and-ride lots that serve fixed route commuter bus routes of more than 20 miles in length. (10 minutes)

5. Hodes (NH): Would allow funds authorized in section 3 of the bill (regarding grants to improve public transportation services) to be used by states to establish or expand commuter matching services to provide commuters with information about alternatives to single occupancy vehicle use. (10 minutes)

Quote of the Day

"No man is great enough or wise enough for any of us to surrender our destiny to. The only way in which any one can lead us is to restore to us the belief in our own guidance." -Henry Miller

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